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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**FOUR MEN INDICTED IN CREDIT CARD SCAM**

BALTIMORE, Maryland - Thomas M. DiBiagio, United States Attorney for the District of Maryland, announced today that a federal grand jury has indicted four Prince George's County men in two separate indictments for defrauding local banks, credit card companies and individuals by using credit card information to submit unauthorized charges for services and goods allegedly performed by various nonexistent businesses.

The two indictments charge Andra Hawkins, age 35, of Laurel; Mark Anthony Wade, age 35, of Upper Marlboro; Charles Tilghman, age 38, of Bladensburg; and Dexter Bond, age 38, also of Bladensburg, with wire fraud and credit card fraud. The indictments and earlier criminal complaints charge the defendants with devising a scheme to set up "front" or dummy businesses including Good Painters, Inc., Exceptional Tile & Carpet, Exceptional Re-Builders, Inc and E-Lete Tile Designs, Inc., with bank accounts at Bank of America, Chevy Chase Bank or First Union. The men then obtained credit card terminals from merchant banks that process VISA or MasterCard

charges. Using credit card account information obtained unlawfully from guests at an Annapolis area hotel, the men submitted several hundred thousand dollars in fraudulent charges using the credit card terminals. After the credit card processors deposited cash into the fake businesses' bank accounts, the money was quickly withdrawn before unwitting credit card accountholders received their next month's billing statement.

All four men have been arrested and if convicted face potential sentences of up to 30 years imprisonment for the wire fraud counts, 15 years imprisonment for credit card fraud counts, a \$1 million fine and restitution.

The U.S. Secret Service advises anyone who believes they may be a victim of the fraud to contact them at (202) 406-8800 or contact the Annapolis Police Department at (410) 268-9000.

An indictment is not a finding of guilt. An individual charged by indictment is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty at some later criminal proceedings.

The criminal charges in this indictment are the result of a joint investigation by Metropolitan Area Fraud Task Force of the Secret Service, Washington Office and the United States Attorney's Office. Assistance in the investigation was provided by the Baltimore Office of the U.S. Secret Service; the Office of Inspector General, U.S. Housing and Urban Development; the Annapolis Police Department; Hyattsville Police Department; the Laurel Police Department; the Metropolitan Police Department; the Prince George's County Police Department, the Montgomery County Police Department; and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Donna C. Sanger.